

# Leadership Development Quality Assessment Tool

A SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL TO ASSIST DISTRICTS AND STATES IN  
STRENGTHENING THEIR LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



Developed by The Quality Working Group of Education Development Center  
In Partnership with The Wallace Foundation

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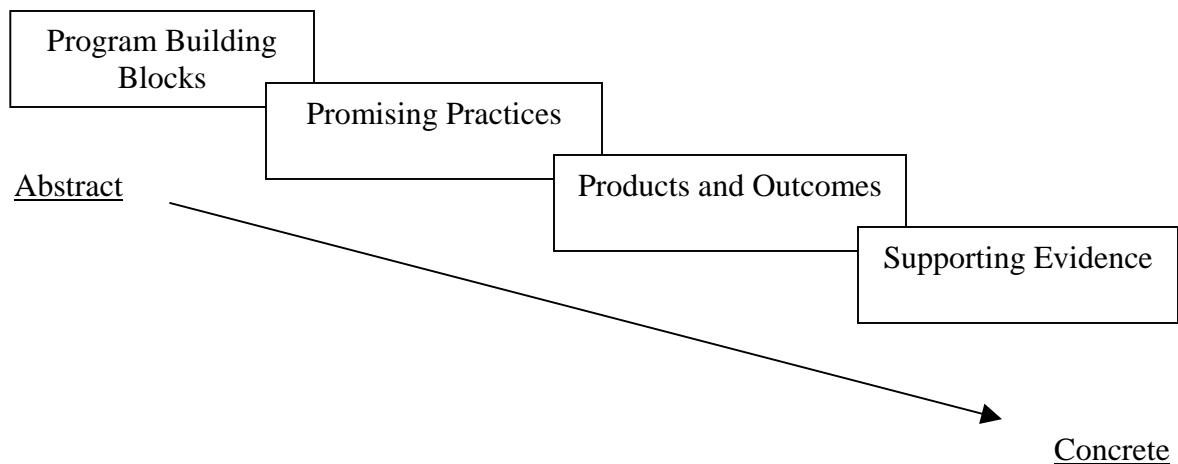
**WORKING DOCUMENT**

## OVERVIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

### The Underpinnings

This tool is designed to provide districts and states with important insights about the quality of leader development activities that can lead to program improvement. The reason for focusing on leader development program *quality* is depicted in the logic model below. High quality leadership (particularly at the principal level) is necessary for improving student learning outcomes and sustaining high levels of academic achievement. This tool is suitable for use in formative evaluations. This process is illustrated in the diagram below.

### A Nested Approach to Program Assessment



Promising practices are identified for each of the building blocks. In turn, for each promising practice there are closely linked products or outcomes. The tool helps users assess their performances in relation to the program building blocks by determining the extent to which their program has achieved the illustrative products or outcomes associated with the promising practice. The tool also helps users to marshal supporting evidence to determine ratings. It moves users along a continuum of abstract thinking about building blocks to increasingly concrete analysis about products, outcomes and evidence.

### The Tool

The Leadership Development Quality Assessment Tool is designed to help districts and states gather insights about the overall quality of the components of: (1) their leader development system and (2) the overall quality of a selected leader development program. The content of the Leadership Development Quality Assessment Tool is informed by the field's emerging understanding of quality leadership development.

## **Assessment of the Leadership Development System**

The tool makes an important distinction between assessment at the system level and assessment at the program level (see Martineau & Hannum 2004; Murphy 2001). The first part of the tool outlines four system building blocks necessary in a high quality *system* of leader development, across a district or a state. This system look calls for examination of all programs for leaders at all stages of development with a focus on the cohesion across the programs.

Identified program building blocks and related promising practices provide the framework for this assessment.

### **System Level Assessment: Building Blocks**

The four building blocks at the system level are:

- Vision;
- Need and Alignment;
- Outcome Assessment; and
- Sustainability.

These four system building blocks, taken together, contribute to a coordinated and coherent approach to leadership development. The first of these is *vision*, so that decision-making about the leader development system is grounded in an explicit, shared vision of leaders equipped to improve student learning outcomes (see Starratt 1995). The second of these is *need and alignment*, where there are linkages across programs that address stated needs of the system (see Forsyth 2002). The third is *outcome assessment*, where there is a process and data approach in place by which the quality and impact of a leadership development system can be assessed (Balanced Scorecard Institute 2004, Baldrige National Quality Program 2004; Killion 2002). The fourth building block is *sustainability*, focusing on creation of conditions that lead to continuous improvement in the training system of leaders (see Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom 2004; National Policy Board for Educational Administration 1999; O'Neil, Fry, Hill & Bottoms 2003; Barkley, Bottoms, Feagin & Clark 2001).

### **Program Level Assessment: Building Blocks and Promising Practices**

The second part of the tool highlights two program building blocks necessary in a high quality program of leader development (program content and process), with the focus on individual initiatives targeted at specific audiences for the purpose of developing leaders' skills.

At this level of there are four program building blocks:

- Program Design;
- Program Content;
- Program Process; and
- Program Outcome Assessment.

This tool contains assessments for two of these building blocks: program content and program process. Assessment tools for the other two building blocks will be released in the future.

Each building block contains assessments of “promising practices,” which represent a synthesis of what the literature tells us are benchmarks of good elements in these areas.

The promising practices included in this analysis are:

For program content:

- Emphasis;
- Alignment; and
- Evidence-based.

*Emphasis* refers to content that reflects an appropriate balance between management skills and leadership, particularly instructional leadership skills (see Balanced Scorecard Institute 2004; Baldrige National Quality Program 2003; Bloom 1989; Killion 1999, 2002; Martineau & Hannum 2004; Reeves 2002, 2003; Waters, Marzano & McNulty 2003). *Alignment* speaks to program content that addresses current relevant reforms and change initiatives (see Connecticut State Standards 1997; Council of Chief State School Officers 1996; National Association of Elementary School Principals 1997; National Policy Board for Educational Administration 1999; Waters & Grubb 2004). *Evidence-based* emphasizes content designed to have the greatest collective impact on student learning outcomes (see Cotton 2003).

For program process:

- Experiential;
- Active; and
- Feedback.

*Experiential* refers to programs providing a varied set of experiences by which participants acquire and practice leadership skills (see Bloom 1989; Heifetz 1994; Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner & Ford-Slack 1995). *Active* addresses the need for programs to use authentic means for developing and demonstrating mastery of leadership skills (see Baldrige National Quality Program 2004; Bloom 1989; Kelley & Peterson 2002; Killion 1999, 2002; Martineau & Hannum 2004). *Feedback* speaks to programs providing timely, specific and balanced feedback to participants, by which their performance can be adjusted (see Folkman 1996).

The full list of the sources in developing this tool is listed on pages 17-18.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

## DIRECTIONS FOR USE

This tool presents building blocks for a *system* of leadership development and building blocks and promising practices for leader development *programs*. Accompanying each promising practice is an illustrative list of linked products and outcomes.

You are asked to convene your project team to reflect on the elements contained in the assessment and then to come to a consensus on the rating for each building block. The ratings are to be made on the pages of the assessment, and then transcribed on to the summary grid (p. 14) where the team should analyze all the individual ratings in order to come up with an overall rating for each building block (see further instructions on page 13).

First, assess your system of leader development (pp.7-8). Then you should select a specific leader development program and assess that program using the form on (pp. 9-12). **You should use a separate form for each specific program assessed.** You are asked to assess one or two key programs that represent the main efforts of your initiative; those with the biggest potential to create change in your state or district.

When completing the assessments on pages 7-12, use the following rating scale:

- P** Product or outcome is **present** as a feature of our system or program.  
*Please provide supporting evidence for each **P** rating. Refer to the last column for examples of supporting evidence that can be used to supplement your rating.*  
*Please provide further explanation in the rationale section*
- NP** Product or outcome is **not present** as a feature of our system or program.  
*No evidence in support of your rating is needed. Please provide further explanation in the rationale section.*
- IP** Product or outcome is currently not a feature of our system or program, but work is **in process** to create or introduce it.  
*Please provide further explanation in the rationale section and provide supporting evidence to demonstrate progress to date.*
- N/A** Product or outcome is **not applicable** for our system or our specific program.  
*Please provide further explanation in the rationale section. No evidence is required to support your rating.*

### NOTES

- In the **rationale** section, please provide justification for your ratings.
- Regarding **evidence**, you should gather evidence and have it available on-site. When you submit your assessment to Wallace, please include only the **single best piece of evidence** for each building block (one for the Leader Development System and one for the Program Content and Program Process building blocks).

## COVER PAGE

*Please complete a separate packet for each program being assessed.*

Send the completed assessment electronically by February 21, 2005 to [jspiro@wallacefoundation.org](mailto:jspiro@wallacefoundation.org) and mail the three pieces of evidence (one for the Leader Development System, one for the Program Content and Program Process building blocks) to Jody Spiro by February 28.

Name of district or state: \_\_\_\_\_

Team members participating in this assessment:

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Name of program being assessed:

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Brief description of the program:

Total number of participants who completed the program to date: \_\_\_\_\_

Of the total completers, the number who are currently in administrative leadership positions:

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## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Start with an assessment of the entire leader development system in your state or district.  
This tool will help you assess whether or not the various leader development programs at the state and district level fit together to reinforce a cohesive purpose that leads to improved student achievement.

System Building Block	Promising Practice	Illustrative Products and Outcomes Linked to Promising Practice	Rating (P, NP, IP, or N/A)	Examples of Supporting Evidence
Vision	Effective systems are based on an explicit, shared vision of education leaders who have the requisite skills and knowledge to improve student learning outcomes.	a) There is a written vision for the leader development system that guides the development of its philosophy, goals, and strategies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written vision statement</li> <li>• Examples of different iterations of the vision statement</li> <li>• A list of the stakeholders who were involved in developing the vision</li> <li>• Agendas and minutes of meetings with stakeholders to develop the vision</li> <li>• Examples of program activities and strategies which were developed in accordance with the program vision</li> </ul>
		b) The vision was developed with significant input from major stakeholders.		
		c) The vision embodies a continuum of leader development that includes a set of linked programs or activities for aspiring, beginning, and experienced leaders.		
Need and Alignment	Effective systems promote alignment between and within state and district programs and address specific needs to improve conditions in which leaders practice.	a) Formal linkages exist between the leader development system, its programs, and the school system(s).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs assessments used (e.g., instruments); results from needs assessment (e.g., report on data collected and analyzed)</li> <li>• Description of the monitoring and evaluation system used to track how the leader development system contributes to school reform objectives</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings or other documentation to illustrate the steps that have been taken to fortify linkages between the leader development system and district priorities</li> </ul>
		b) Mechanisms are in place to ensure that the programs within the leader development system support district needs and strengthen school system reform.		
		c) There is a valid data-driven needs assessment that defines current district needs and prevailing conditions that must be addressed through the leader development system.		

System Building Block	Promising Practice	Illustrative Products and Outcomes Linked to Promising Practice	Rating (P, NP, IP, or N/A)	Examples of Supporting Evidence
Outcome Assessment	Effective systems have processes and data systems in place that enable the district to assess and continuously improve the quality and impact of its leader development system.	a) There is a data collection system that gathers individual and programmatic longitudinal data.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specifications for the data collection system</li><li>• Participant and program performance criteria</li><li>• Feedback from focus groups</li><li>• Report on the “graduates” of the program</li></ul>
		b) There are clearly defined criteria that are used to assess participants’ and program performance.		
		c) There is a process in place to translate data collected into program improvement.		
Sustain-ability	Effective systems create conditions that lead to sustainable improvements in the training systems of leaders.	a) There are comprehensive programs in place that promote the culture change needed to ensure that all children learn and achieve.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program descriptions and documentation to illuminate how culture change is being introduced</li><li>• Products that have been produced or distributed by learning communities</li><li>• Documentation that identifies who the change management specialists are; where they work; and what they do in support of sustainable change</li><li>• Requirement (law) for continuing education</li></ul>
		b) Learning communities operate throughout the system to strengthen leader quality.		
		c) Board policies are in place that support on-going leadership development.		
<u>Rationale</u>				



## ASSESSMENT OF A SPECIFIC PROGRAM

Now assess the specific program listed on the cover sheet

NAME OF PROGRAM ASSESSED: \_\_\_\_\_ TYPE: Aspiring \_\_ Beginning \_\_ Experienced\_\_

Program Building Block	Promising Practice	Illustrative Products and Outcomes Linked to Promising Practice	Rating (P, NP, IP, or N/A)	Examples of Supporting Evidence
Program Content	<p><b>EMPHASIS</b></p> <p>Effective programs have content that focuses on leadership, change management and includes the necessary management skills.</p>	a) The program curriculum places the greatest emphasis on leadership skills that improve the quality of instruction, learning and change management skills needed to bring about change.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum content documents</li> <li>Instructional materials, plans, or syllabi</li> <li>Reference list of research-based resources used to inform decisions about knowledge and skill areas of emphasis to be included in program content</li> <li>Documents that detail and describe performance expectations for instructional leaders</li> <li>Participant assignments, assessments, or learning contracts that show evidence of approach to instructional leadership skill development</li> </ul>
		b) There is a curriculum for the program that develops required managerial skills (e.g., report-writing; budget preparation; ensuring school safety; and compliance with local, state and federal mandates).		
		c) There is a curriculum for the program that emphasizes the development of such instructional leadership skills as communication and interaction with relevant stakeholders; classroom observations and feedback to teachers; recognition of student and staff achievement; creation and maintenance of a safe and orderly school environment; support of professional development of staff; role modeling; coaching and distributed leadership.		
		d) There are routine reviews of program content to ensure the appropriate balance between leadership and management skills.		
<p><u>Rationale</u></p>				

Program Building Block	Promising Practice	Illustrative Products and Outcomes Linked to Promising Practice	Rating (P, NP, IP, or N/A)	Examples of Supporting Evidence
Program Content	<b>ALIGNMENT</b> Effective programs develop the leadership skills needed to address change initiatives within the state or district programs and among those at the federal, state and district level.	a) There is a curriculum that is closely linked to the leadership conditions in which participants will work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program description/overview</li><li>• Course outlines</li><li>• District planning documents</li><li>• Reflective journals</li><li>• Sample assignments and/or portfolios</li><li>• Interviews with program participants and staff</li><li>• Evidence of changes in program content to reflect changes in local, state or national conditions</li></ul>
		b) There is a curriculum that explicitly addresses how local, state and national conditions influence student learning outcomes.		
		c) There is a curriculum that prepares program participants to help transform conditions that impede student learning.		
<u>Rationale:</u>				
Program Content	<b>EVIDENCE-BASED</b> Effective programs use the latest research to identify the leadership skills and behaviors that have the greatest impact on student learning outcomes.	a) There is a curriculum in place that provides for the systematic development of research-based skills and behaviors associated with effective instructional leadership such as data-driven decision making; developing others; promoting meaningful stakeholder engagement; maintaining an ongoing commitment to results; and effective acquisition, allocation, and use of resources.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goals, strategies, syllabi, assignments, case studies, assessments</li><li>• A review of leaderships development research</li><li>• Meeting agendas and/or working notes indicating how research was used to develop program goals, strategies</li></ul>
		b) There are mechanisms in place that enable program sponsors and implementing partners to stay abreast of current research on leader behaviors that exert the influence on student learning outcomes and to incorporate these findings into the program’s curriculum.		
		c) Program planners have the skills and experience to be discriminating when reviewing current research.		
<u>Rationale:</u>				

Program Building Block	Promising Practice	Illustrative Products and Outcomes Linked to Promising Practice	Rating (P, NP, IP, or N/A)	Examples of Supporting Evidence
Program Process	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b> Effective programs take into consideration the previous experiences of the participants and prepares them for the real world in which they will practice.	a) The program includes authentic means to learn the material such as team work, simulations, in-box exercises, and role plays.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Units of study, lesson plans</li><li>• Samples of activities, assessments</li><li>• Course syllabi</li><li>• Examples of program/course revision based on experimentation</li><li>• Coaching notes/journals</li></ul>
		b) The program includes work site experiences such as internships and individual performance coaching.		
		c) The program provides opportunities for participants to practice what they are learning in a supervised setting with an expert leader.		
		d) Program builds upon participants’ previous successful training experiences and “unfreezes” their previous negative experiences to make them open to new ideas and perspectives.		
<u>Rationale:</u>				
Program Process	<b>ACTIVE</b> Effective programs fully engage participants in their own learning including collaborative program development with participants.	a) The program uses such instructional methods as: projects, teamwork and self-directed work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Artifacts of participant performance of leadership and/or management proficiencies (e.g., products produced in internship or on-the-job experience; products developed in course to meet school or district request; portfolio of work)</li><li>• Statement of proficiencies that program instructors share with participants</li><li>• Specifications, criteria and standards used to assess participant mastery of key leadership and management skills</li></ul>
		b) The program is continuously revised to accommodate newly arising participant needs.		
		c) The program gives participants the opportunity to engage in learner identified problem-solving.		
		d) The role of the instructor is as facilitator, not lecturer.		
<u>Rationale:</u>				



### Directions for Completing the Summary Grid

1. Complete the **Summary Grid** for the system you are assessing and for each program you are evaluating (each program on a separate page).
2. Complete this Grid after your team has compiled all supporting evidence.
3. Transfer your ratings (**N, NP, IP, or N/A**) from the Leader Development System Grid. On the Summary Grid the A-C columns correspond to the three illustrative products and outcomes identified in the tool for each promising practice. On the Selected Leader Development Program Summary Grid the A-D columns correspond to the three to four illustrative products and outcomes identified in the tool for each promising practice.
4. Now, based on the ratings you transferred, the evidence you compiled, and the comments you made on the tool, determine a rating for the quality of your leader development system and your program's performance to date for *each* of the promising practices. Use the following rating scale:

1	=	We have made <b>little or no progress</b> to date in this area
2	=	We have made <b>moderate</b> progress to date in this area
3	=	We have made <b>substantial</b> progress to date in this area
N/A	=	This practice is not applicable to our program

5. Based on all the data you have entered onto the Grid, score how your leader development system and program performs on each of the **Program Building Blocks** by totaling the scores you have assigned to each of the Promising Practices associated with each building block.
  - ☞ Enter the total score for each of the Program Building Blocks in the corresponding cell of the Grid. The total for the Program Content Building Block should be listed in the Overall Program Content Rating cell and the total for the Program Process Building Block should be listed in the Overall Program Process Rating cell.
  - ☞ Use the rationale section as needed to shed further light on your Program Building Block scores. If you had any N/A scores, explain why here.
6. Enter the Overall Quality Composite Rating in the cell located at the bottom of the Grid in the ratings summary column. Assuming you didn't have any N/A ("not applicable") scores, your total should range between 6 (the minimum) and 18 (the maximum).
  - ☞ The Overall Quality Composite Rating is the sum of the ratings that appear in the Program Content Rating and Program Process Rating cells.
7. When your Grid is complete, you will have a total score for each of the program building blocks, a rationale for your scoring and an overall quality composite rating.

## Summary Grid

**Note:** Transfer the information you recorded on the promising practices inventory to columns A-C. The information in columns A-C should be used as the basis for discussion to determine your ratings for each building block, which should be circled and explained (rationale). Then rate the overall system.

Name of State/District: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>A. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM</b>				
<b>SYSTEM BUILDING BLOCK</b>	<b>PRODUCT &amp; OUTCOME RATINGS (from pp. 7-8)</b>			<b>RATINGS (1,2,3,N/A SCALE)) THE CONSENSUS RATING BY YOUR TEAM AFTER DISCUSSION OF THE RATINGS FOR A, B &amp; C BOX YOUR RATING</b>
	A	B	C	
<b>Vision</b>				<b>1   2   3   N/A</b>
Rationale for your rating:				
<b>Need and Alignment</b>				<b>1   2   3   N/A</b>
Rationale for your rating:				
<b>Outcome Assessment</b>				<b>1   2   3   N/A</b>
Rationale for your rating::				
<b>Sustainability</b>				<b>1   2   3   N/A</b>
Rationale for your rating:				
<b>Overall Quality Composite Rating</b>				

**Summary Grid**  
**B. SELECTED LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM #1**  
 (Submit a separate page for each Leader Development Program you are assessing)

Specific Leader Development Program – Name of Program						<b>Program Type:</b> <input type="radio"/> Aspiring <input type="radio"/> Beginning <input type="radio"/> Experienced
PROGRAM BUILDING BLOCK	PROMISING PRACTICE	PRODUCT & OUTCOME RATINGS (from pp. 10-12)  (P, NP, IP, or N/A)				RATINGS (1,2,3,N/A SCALE)  THE CONSENSUS RATING BY YOUR TEAM AFTER DISCUSSION OF THE RATINGS FOR A, B, C & D  BOX YOUR RATING <b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
		A	B	C	D	
<b>Program Content</b>	<i>Emphasis</i>					<b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
	<i>Alignment</i>				<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(45deg); transform-origin: center; position: relative;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; position: absolute; transform: rotate(-45deg); transform-origin: center;"></div> </div>	<b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
	<i>Evidence-based</i>				<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(45deg); transform-origin: center; position: relative;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; position: absolute; transform: rotate(-45deg); transform-origin: center;"></div> </div>	<b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
<b>Overall Program Content Rating</b>						
Rationale for your rating:						
<b>Program Process</b>	<i>Experiential</i>					<b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
	<i>Active</i>					<b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
	<i>Feedback</i>					<b>1 2 3 N/A</b>
<b>Overall Program Process Rating</b>						
Rationale for your rating:						
<b>Overall Quality Composite Rating for This Program</b>						

**Summary Grid**  
**C. SELECTED LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM #2**  
 (Submit a separate page for each Leader Development Program you are assessing)

Specific Leader Development Program – Name of Program						<b>Program Type:</b> <input type="radio"/> Aspiring <input type="radio"/> Beginning <input type="radio"/> Experienced
PROGRAM BUILDING BLOCK	PROMISING PRACTICE	PRODUCT & OUTCOME RATINGS (from pp. 9-12)  (P, NP, IP, or N/A)				RATINGS (1,2,3,N/A SCALE)  THE CONSENSUS RATING BY YOUR TEAM AFTER DISCUSSION OF THE RATINGS FOR A, B, C & D  BOX YOUR RATING
		A	B	C	D	
<b>Program Content</b>	<i>Emphasis</i>					1 2 3 N/A
	<i>Alignment</i>				<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(45deg); transform-origin: center; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 0; left: 0; right: 0; bottom: 0; border: 1px solid black;"></div> </div>	1 2 3 N/A
	<i>Evidence-based</i>				<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(45deg); transform-origin: center; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 0; left: 0; right: 0; bottom: 0; border: 1px solid black;"></div> </div>	1 2 3 N/A
<b>Overall Program Content Rating</b>						
Rationale for your rating:						
<b>Program Process</b>	<i>Experiential</i>					1 2 3 N/A
	<i>Active</i>					1 2 3 N/A
	<i>Feedback</i>					1 2 3 N/A
<b>Overall Program Process Rating</b>						
Rationale for your rating:						
<b>Overall Quality Composite Rating for This Program</b>						



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